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618 Shantung, but the institution was not vital to the people of those provinces.[45] In Fukien (and neighboring Kwangtung in the Central-South Region) where the clan had reached the highest stage of development, it still played a major role in society up to World War II.[46]

621 618 Where the clan was strong, villages were wholly or predominately made up of members of one clan.[47] This fact permitted clan administration of the village independent of the state, except in the matter of taxes, major crimes, and the necessity of registering marriages. The village governed itself through clan enforcement of centuries-old customs inculcated by the family. Clan rule was not weakened when the Republic introduced officials at the village subdistrict levels, where none had existed under the imperial government. The new officials were recruited from the same group which had managed the clans, and clan and government

45. Hu, op. cit., pp. 10-11, and passim; Lang, op. cit., pp. 178-79. Also see the description of the minor role played by the clan in the Kiangsu villages investigated by Fei Hsiao-tung (t'ung), Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1939, pp. 84-86; and in the Anhwei village investigated by Morton H. Fried, Fabric of Chinese Society: A Study of the Social Life of a Chinese County Seat, New York, Praeger, 1953, pp. 92-95.

46. Hu, op. cit., pp. 10-11; Lang, op. cit., pp. 173-78.

47. Hu, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

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621 posts were often held by the same individual.[48]

However, even in its last stronghold, the
618 clan was a dying institution. Its authority was being undermined by the growing disproportion of wealth among its members, the dissatisfactions arising from misappropriation of clan wealth, and the subversive forces of industrialization, modernization, and modern city life. At the same time, traditional leadership was being challenged by younger men who had demonstrated their natural abilities by the acquisition of wealth, a modern education, or an official position. Lang's investigation of two Fukien clans in 1936 showed their leadership consisted of two merchants, one landlord, and the owner of a private school.[49]

Administrative positions in the clan were sought because they controlled immense wealth which could be manipulated to increase individual or family influence or fortunes. Besides the duties of keeping the peace among the institution's composite branches and families, the clan hierarchy was responsible for the maintenance of the ancestral temple, the conduct of ancestor worship, the defense of clan interests before the

48. Lang, op. cit., pp. 177-78.

49. Ibid., pp. 175-76; Hu, op. cit., pp. 89-90, 98-100.

24 18 the whole of south China was essentially the steady outward push of an efficient agricultural technique which displaced the more primitive aboriginal food-gatherers and primitive slash-burn agriculturists, abosrbed most of these people into its operation and drove the remnants higher and higher into the hills. The characteristically Chinese agriculture is intensive; that is it uses large quantities of human labor in irrigating, fertilizing, and cultivating land for maximum yields. Its unit of socio-economic organization is the village, composed of those families which cultivate the land within easy walking distance of its center. It was in the villages of rural China spread over a vast area to exploit the land through a common technology, that the characteristic way of life developed. It is his family's village which is "home" to Chinese of all classes, no matter how far he may wander or how Westernized his life may have become. There are the ties with his own family's past, symbolized by the ancestral temple and the family or clan burial ground. There are the other families with which his own has built an enduring network of reciprocal favors and obligations. It is in the farming villages that Communist party workers now seek to bring about fundamental changes in the way of life and to break up the old complex of family and local loyalties.

62 18 What are the common patterns of village life from the plains of Shantung to the narrow, crowded flood-plains of coastal Chekiang and Fukien? We shall sketch these before discussing

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181 variations represented by urban life.

A. The Pattern of Village Life

511 First of all, life in the farming village is meager. In Shantung in 1932 there was .45 acres of cultivated land per person; the richer semi-tropical province of Chekiang had only .3 acres for each person.[1] Farm families save everything; fecal matter and refuse go into a pit near which a pig is kept, and at the time of spring fertilizing the material from the pit is mixed with topsoil or water and spread on the fields. Grass and grainstalks are carefully husbanded to be used as fodder for the farm animal, by no means one animal to a family and as fuel for cooking and rarely, for heating the house. Cloth is scarce and clothing is worn until it falls apart; after that the rags are used to make the soles of cloth shoes. The shortage of wood for all purposes has long been acute, and farm buildings are made of pounded earth, mud bricks, and, in the rice region, of bamboo lathe and mud plaster. Floors are of earth and only the dwellings of the wealthier farmers have glass windows. The dominant fact of life in the Chinese countryside is poverty. This has grown steadily worse during the last hundred years as factory-made goods destroyed village handicrafts, usury and tenancy increased, wars and ineffectual governments brought disruption and oppression, and overpopulation became steadily worse. "The

1. Geo. B. Cressey, Asia's Land and Peoples, New York, 1944, p. 87. Cressey cites C. C. Chang "An Estimate of China's Land and Crops "Nanking. 1932; Cressey p. 88:"...an average farm family of 6.2 persons must obtain its entire livelihood from a farm of 4.18 acres of which but 3.76 [contd]